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## 'Zongo Funds Not For Funeral Donation'

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Alhaji Boniface Abubakar Siddique, Minister-designate for Inner Cities and Zongo Development, has hinted that the Zongo Development Fund, which is being set up by the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP), would be used to undertake development projects to benefit our brothers and sisters in the zongos.

According to him, projects such as drains, roads, rehabilitation of schools and stocking of libraries in the zongo communities are some of the development projects the Zongo Development Fund would take care of.

Alhaji Abubakar Siddique stated: "We are talking about stocking libraries; helping to rehabilitate schools in the zongos, not the whole the country.

"These are some of the things that we will be doing. If you look at infrastructure, we will look at the drains; we will look at the roads and other things that have to be done to keep the community together."

Speaking before the Appointments Committee of Parliament during his vetting yesterday, the Minister-designate said the fund would not be used to sponsor social and traditional engagements such as funerals, marriages, and naming ceremonies among others.

"My role is not to sponsor or help somebody christen or name a child. There won't be packages for funerals. If I am coming for somebody's funeral, I am coming as a Member of Parliament or as a friend, or as a family member," he assured the people.

To ensure that members of the Zongo communities understand what the fund was set up for, Alhaji Abubakar Siddique explained that he would educate them on the priority areas of the fund.

“Confidence is truly a unique step in challenging our efforts and possibility

By: Boaz Akude

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Indications are that government would be allocating US\$50 million to the fund, which would be captured in the 2017 Budget.

The Minister-designate promised to fast-track the development of Zongo communities to enhance the livelihood of the residents, so as to bridge the yawning gap in security, sanitation, economic empowerment, infrastructure and social development.

Continuing, Alhaji Abubakar Siddique said the Zongo communities, if provided with good drainage systems, security and other development facilities, as is being done in areas referred to as residential areas, could develop into standard residential areas, as in other parts of the country.

Vowing to replicate same in the Zongo communities, the Minister-designate was optimistic that people's perceptions about Zongo communities would change, if the NPP could do this within the first four years of its term in office.

**By Richard Kofi Attenkah**

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